

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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COMIDEASTFOR

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E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: DJIBOUTI-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

REF: 77 DJIBOUTI 0753

1. SUMMARY: THE RECENT VISIT TO DJIBOUTI AN AN ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION
SERVED TO CLEAR THE AIR SOMEWHAT. THE PREVIOUS VISIT TO ADDIS ABABA OF

FONMIN ABDALLAH KAMIL AND THE VISIT TO DJIBOUTI DID MUCH TO
CONVINCE MOST GOVT LEADERS THAT THE POSICY OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVT
IN DJIBOUTI IS NON-AGGRESSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE OF DJIBOUTI SOVEREIGNTY.
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FONMIN KAMIL IS CONVINCED THAT SUPPORT TO THE RECENT TERRORIST
EPISODES IN DJIBOUTI COULD NOT HAVE COME FROM EPMG CHAIRMAN MENGISTU
OR HIS IMMEDIATE ADVISORS. THE ETHIOPIANS HAVE INVITED A DJIBOUTI
DELEGATION TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS IN ADDIS ABABA AND AN ACCORD IN
PRINCIPLE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS HAS BEEN MADE.

2. LIKE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES INOVLVED IN DJIBOUTI, ETHIOPIA SUDDENLY

DISCOVERED THE GRAVITY OF THE DOMESTIC SITUATION ONLY IN RECENT WEEKS. PEOPLE IN ADDIS BELIEVED THAT DJIBOUTI WOULD CONTINUE TO MOVE ALONG AT ITS OWN PACE; ETHNIC TENSIONS WOULD BE LIVED WITH, BUT IF IGNORED, THE PROBLEMS COULD NONETHELESS BE HANDLED INTERNALLY. SOMALI PRESSURES COULD PROBABLY BE RESISTED BY REINFORCING CERTAIN SMALL POLITICAL PARTIES. THIS IS THE PICTURE PAINTED BY ETHIOPIAN CHARGE MOUSSA YASSIN IN A LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH THE CHARGE ON 8 JAM. HE SAID THAT THE PALMIER EN ZINCE DISASTER CAME AS A TERRIBLE SURPRISE; IN FACT, HE WAS IN ADDIS AT THE TIME TRYING TO HAVE AN AUDIENCE TO EXPLAIN THE WORSENING SITUATION IN DJIBOUTI. HE CLAIMED THAT IT WAS AT HIS INSISTENCE THAT THE RESPONSE OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVT TO PRESIDENT GOULED'S CHARGES OF COMPLICITY IN THE TERRORIST EPISODES WAS SO MILD.

3. THE ETHIOPIAN MISSION CHIEF TOOK CONSIDERABLE PAINS TO NOTE THE VARIOUS EFFORTS TAKEN BY HIS GOVT TO ALLAY THE SUSPICIONS OF THE DJIBOUTIANS. HE FELT THAT THESE EFFORTS WERE LARGELY UNREWARDED, BUT THAT HE AND HIS GOVT WERE AWARE THAT DJIBOUTI WAS A NEW STATE AND WAS ENTITLED TO A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF UNDERSTANDING. HE WAS ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS THAT THE USG SHOULD AVOID MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT ETHIOPIAN GOVT INTENTIONS IN DJIBOUTI AND REQUESTED THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING AT ANY TIME TO EXPLAIN HIS COUNTRY'S VIEWS OF THE SITUATION.

4. THE CHARGE REPEATED THE U.S. POSITION ON THE DJIBOUTI SITUATION JUST AS HE HAS REPEATEDLY WITH FORMER CONGEN (AMBASSADOR)
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FITIGU AND TO MOUSSA YASSIN; THERE IS A VIRTUAL COMMUNALITY OF VIEWS. WE BOTH SUPPORT THE INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI; WE BOTH RECOGNIZE THAT DJIBOUTI'S EXISTENCE DEPENDS ON TRADE WITH ETHIOPIA; WE BOTH SHOULD MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO AVOID ANY SPILLOVER FROM PROBLEMS BETWEEN NEIGHBORS, PARTICULARLY ANY TRANSFERENCE OF THE OGADEN WAR. MOUSSA YASSIN AGREED ON ALL POINTS.

5. COMMENT: AFTER SEVERAL DISCUSSION ON PROBLEM OF ETHIOPIAN-DJIBOUTI RELATIONS WITH INTERESTED CONTENDERS, I BEGIN TO SUSPECT THAT

CLAIMS OF NO TOP-LEVEL ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT TERRORISM MAY BE TRUE. IT IS NOT SO HARD TO IMAGINE THAT THE ETHIOPIAN INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS PROBABLY SAILS ON WITH FEW CONTROLS FROM THE TOP AND COULD BE INVOLVED IN DESTABILIZATION EFFORTS WITHOUT DIRECT ORDERS. THE INTENSIVE OUTSIDE INTEREST IN DJIBOUTI, AS MANIFEST BY THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION AND NUMEROUS OTHER CONTACTS BY FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN DJIBOUTI AND ELSEWHERE, HAS CAUSED NECESSARY TOP-LEVEL ATTENTION TO BE BROUGHT. I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT MOUSSA YASSIN HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO BE OPEN WITH CERTAIN DIPLOMATS, INCLUDING THE U.S. IN THIS LAST MEETING, HE SEEMED MUCH MORE SUBDUED, UNINTERESTED IN MARXIST INTERPRETATIONS OF

EVENTS AND ALMOST A STATESMAN.

CLARKE

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